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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2538

Dec. 27, 1991

**ARMENIAN DONATION** -- USDA and the American Diocese of the Armenian Church have agreed on provisions for U.S. food donations to the people of Armenia, the first such donations under President **George Bush's** \$165 million plan for U.S. humanitarian food assistance to former republics of the Soviet Union. The delivery and distribution of donated U.S. wheat and dairy products to Armenia will begin in early January. "Our donations will provide about a one-month supply of dry milk and two-month supply of butter to help offset food shortages anticipated in Armenia this winter," says Deputy Secretary of Agriculture **Ann M. Veneman**. **Contact: Roger Runningen** (202) 720-4623.

**SUGAR PRODUCTION TO BE UP** -- USDA economists say U.S. sugar production for 1991-92 should be a record 7.33 million short tons, up 400,000 tons from last year. The last three crops were affected by weather, but in each year, sugar production was above 6.5 million tons -- higher than at any time in history with the exception of 1975 and 1987. In the last two years, sugar consumption has grown faster than high fructose corn syrup consumption. **Contact: Peter Buzzanell** (202) 219-0888.

**LIVESTOCK FEED MAY BENEFIT FROM MOROCCAN COUSIN** -- Birdsfoot trefoil, a long-unappreciated forage crop, may gain popularity as a livestock feed because of genes from its wild relatives in Morocco. The Moroccan "cousin" has underground "runners" that let the plant spread to new areas. **Paul R. Beuselinck**, a USDA plant geneticist, wants to genetically move the underground runners into American varieties. "If successful, I expect acreage of this perennial crop to double in size and help pastures that are now planted only to grass or are unimproved," Beuselinck says. **Contact: Paul R. Beuselinck** (314) 882-6406.

**GRAIN STOCKS** -- While farm income is unlikely to match 1990's record, most indicators point to financial stability in 1992, USDA economist **Barbara Claffey** says. Low U.S. grain stocks put the focus on 1992 production. Rises in most retail food prices will remain below the rate of increase expected for the overall Consumer Price Index except for some fruits and vegetables. The U.S. is entering 1992 with an abundance of red meat and poultry, but a lower supply of some winter vegetables from a whitefly infestation in California and Arizona. **Contact: Barbara Claffey** (202) 720-5505.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU** from all the staff at USDA Radio-TV Division: **Vic Powell, Brenda Curtis, Maria Bynum, Gary Crawford, Marci Hilt, DeBoria Janifer, Pat O'Leary, Lisa Robinson, Mocile Trotter & Lynn Wyvill.**

**BORON DOESN'T BUILD BIGGER BICEPS --** Contrary to claims by companies, USDA studies offer no evidence that boron can help men build muscle, say USDA scientists who are studying boron as a possible essential trace mineral in American diets. **Forrest Nielsen**, director of USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center in Grand Forks, N.D., says a number of companies have developed boron-containing supplements and have alleged the resulting increase in testosterone levels will enhance the muscle-building effects of weight lifting. **Contact: Forrest Nielsen** (701) 795-8456.

**CATFISH PROCESSING UP --** Farm-raised catfish processed during November totaled 31.1 million pounds, up 11 percent from a year ago. Net pounds of processed fish sold during November totaled 15.5 million pounds, an increase of 15 percent from the comparable month in 1990. The November average prices received by processors for whole fish were \$1.29 per pound for ice pack and \$1.52 for frozen fish. **Contact: Ron Sitzman** (202) 720-3244.

**FOOD MARKETING SYSTEM --** The U.S. food marketing system has entered the 1990's considerably changed in size competitiveness and performance from that of the early 1980's, says USDA economist **Anthony E. Gallo**. The system has been performing spectacularly as the 1990's unfold. Profits and productivity are up. Yet, the food marketing system's relative economic importance to the rest of the economy has been declining. **Contact: Anthony E. Gallo** (202) 219-0866.

**POTATO STOCKS UP --** Production of fall potatoes hit a record high of 372 million hundredweight in the 22 producing states in 1991, USDA economists say. This figure is 6 percent above last year and 5 percent above the previous high in 1985. December 1 stocks, at 241 million hundredweight in the 15 storage states, were up 7 percent. **Contact: Arvin Budge** (202) 720-4285.

**CATTLE GENE MAPPING --** USDA scientists are working to make cattle selection as easy as looking at a map to find your way from one city to another. As part of the effort, scientists at the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Neb., are mapping cattle's overall genetic makeup -- called the genome. "By identifying genes or groups of genes that control cattle traits, the industry will be able to produce the types of beef most desired by consumers," says **R. Dean Plowman**, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. **Contact: Craig Beattie** (402) 762-4359.

**MILK PRODUCTION DOWN SLIGHTLY --** Milk production in the 21 major states during November was 9.91 billion pounds, 1 percent less than a year ago. The production per cow averaged 1,185 pounds, 14 pounds more than a year ago. The number of cows was 8.36 million head, 180 thousand head less than a year ago. **Contact: Daniel Buckner** (202) 720-4448.

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## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1803** -- Job layoffs and pay cuts are forcing many people to live on less. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Brenda Curtis** talks with extension agents and home economists about how to cope with these dramatic lifestyle changes. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1285** -- Living on less; the rural homeless; restaurants imitate life; nutrition: what are we changing; giving pizza a chance. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1794** -- USDA News Highlights; 1992 pork production; cattle herd expansion; U.S. sugar outlook; oilseed outlook. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1452** -- Costly forage fungus; niche markets; St. Croix sheep; raising ostriches; Mexican maize murders earworms. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Mon., Jan. 6, horticultural products review; Wed., Jan. 8, vegetables; Fri., Jan. 10, farm labor; Mon., Jan. 13, crop production, world ag/supply demand situation, grain stocks, rice stocks; Tues., Jan. 14, world ag/grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation. **(These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)**

**DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on an electronic "divining rod" for soil moisture; **Pat O'Leary** reports on food marketing in Poland; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on diet & cataract risk; **Chris Larson** reports on a project in Ohio to protect local water quality; **Will Pemble** reports on a new method for preserving brown rice; **Mike Thomas** reports on a Missouri 4-H project to help homeless, inner city children; & **Tyson Gair** reports on the unusual paulownia trees. Repeat feed of "**Winter Care of Plants**," "**Living History Farms**" and "**Help for Farmers with Disabilities**."

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on a sustainable ag center; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on weather just for farmers & **Will Pemble** has the story on a boll weevil bait stick.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:*

**Thursdays** from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST.

## OFFMIKE

**TAXES AND WATER**...are the big issues this winter, says **Gary Wulf** (KZEN, Central City, Neb.). Nebraska is proposing to include breeding livestock and farm machinery in the property tax system. Gary says there's also controversy regarding the amount of water being pumped from the Platte River for farm irrigation. Those opposed to issuing water permits want a water conservation plan for the river. Gary says this year he produced more stories than ever before on water, the environment and endangered species.

**BIG NEWS**...in Watertown, S.D., is the planned announcement of a manufacturing facility to produce starch and sweeteners from corn. **Jim Thoreson** (KWAT, Watertown) has been covering the development and says the purchase of land for the plant in southeast South Dakota is scheduled to get underway soon. It will be a source of employment during and after construction, and a market for local producers.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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**IMPACTING THE PROCESS**...was the theme of the recent annual Issues Conference in Worthington, Minn., says **Don Wick** (KWOA, Worthington, Minn.). Cattle, sheep and pork producers learned about state and federal systems that affect their industries. Don says the state extension service plans to cluster counties together to maintain service from its offices during a reduction in personnel that is to take effect this coming July.

**IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR**...for commodity association meetings, says **Dean Thurow** (KCJB, Minot, N.D.). Taxes and plans for spring planting are issues receiving attention. Dean says producers are telling him they are concerned about the need for clear and consistent wetlands regulations.

**CONGRATULATIONS**...to **Shelly Beyer** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, Minn.). She received the 1991 Communicator of the Year award from the Minnesota Farm Bureau.

**VIC POWELL**  
Chief, Radio & TV Division